

Odour complaints – Rimrock Feeders

The NRCB continues to work closely with Rimrock Feeders and the people of High River to monitor odour levels related to the feedlot. NRCB inspectors have been onsite at the Rimrock feedlot and in the town of High River many times over the past year, at all times of the day and night, to monitor odours, speak to residents, and consult with the Rimrock operators on management options. As directed by the NRCB, the catch basins at Rimrock Feeders were emptied and the contents were land applied before freeze up.

In addition, the NRCB has been in communication with the Calgary Region Airshed Zone which has installed a portable air monitoring station in High River. The NRCB is also exploring other methods of measuring and monitoring odour. The NRCB will recommend other management practices if efforts to manage the odour have not been successful.

Below are answers to the most common questions NRCB inspectors have heard from High River residents.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is responsible for permitting of the proposed biodigester at the Rimrock feedlot?

The NRCB is not responsible for permitting the proposed biodigester facilities.

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas will be responsible for permitting the biodigester facility and any questions should be directed to them.

More information on the proposed biodigester can be found by googling Rimrock Renewables.

2. If I have concerns about the proposed biodigester who should I contact?

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas will be responsible for permitting the biodigester facility and any questions should be directed to them.

More information on the proposed biodigester can be found by googling Rimrock Renewables.

3. When Rimrock starts operating its biodigester will it decrease the odours?

The NRCB has no regulatory authority over the proposed biodigester.

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas will be responsible for permitting the biodigester facility and any questions should be directed to them.

More information on the proposed biodigester can be found by googling Rimrock Renewables.

4. Why is this odour from Rimrock so much worse than when Western Feedlots owned the operation? What is Rimrock doing differently?

The NRCB believes the feedlot catch basins were the main source of the odour during the summer months last year. This could be the result of the rainfall in June/July combined with increased solids in the catch basins.

Rimrock does not appear to be operating any differently than the previous feedlot owner and operates similarly to other feedlots in southern Alberta.

5. What is the NRCB doing about the odour?

NRCB staff have conducted site inspections to follow up on complaints, including during evening hours, overnight and in the early morning when complainants report the odour is stronger.

The NRCB had the operator install a bale wind break on the upwind side of the catch basins to reduce the prevailing winds from carrying the odour towards High River, especially in the early morning and late evening. The NRCB also instructed the operator to have the catch basins emptied and land applied and to remove any sludge build up from the bottom of the basins. This took place before freeze up.

The NRCB will continue to investigate possible pen and manure management practices that could be causing the stronger odours

6. Why is it taking so long to reduce the odours?

The NRCB is working with Rimrock to determine the exact source or sources of the odour and is then recommending the most feasible and effective method to reduce those odours. This process all takes time as different practices are changed or new ones put into place.

7. What is a catch basin and what is its purpose?

Rimrock's feedlot pens are all sloped so that any manure runoff from the pens flows into containment ponds (catch basins) to prevent it from leaving the property and impacting any surface water bodies (rivers, streams, etc) or neighbouring property. This runoff is then applied to the land where the nutrients are used by crops. The design of Rimrock's catch basins reflects industry standards.

8. Will the NRCB shut down the feedlot if the odour issue is not resolved?

Right now the NRCB is focusing on working with the operator to return to a more acceptable level of odour, such as when Western operated the feedlot. This includes

trying to reduce the odour frequency and offensiveness that residents of High River have stated are worse in the late evening and early morning.

9. Is Rimrock feeding more cattle than Western did? Did the NRCB allow the feedlot to expand?

No. The feedlot has not expanded.

The NRCB issued a grandfathering decision on October 8, 2020 determining that the feedlot had a deemed approval for 35,000 beef finishers. Records provided for the grandfathering determination were from Western's historical inventory records.

10. Why was Rimrock allowed to restart the feedlot after Western shut down?

Western Feedlots never intended to shut the facility down, it was only depopulated temporarily until a new owner was found. The facility was never considered to be abandoned.

11. Are there chemicals that can be sprayed on or added to the manure to reduce the odours?

The NRCB has never seen or found any chemicals that successfully reduce the odours of solid manure.

12. Who is the regulating body for feedlots in Alberta?

The NRCB is responsible for administering the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* (AOPA), which is the legislation that regulates all confined feeding operations (CFOs) in the province.